

REMARKS

It is noted that, notwithstanding any claim amendments made herein, if any, Applicants' intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements, even if amended herein or later during prosecution.

Claims 1, 4-9 and 11, 12, 14, 16-24, and 27-31 are all of the claims currently pending in the present Application. Claims 2, 3, 10, 13, 15, 25, 26, 32, and 33 are canceled.

Claims 17-21 are considered as allowed. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 8, 9, 15, 16, 26, and 33 would be allowable if rewritten in independent format, and have accordingly rewritten these claims, strictly for purpose of expediting prosecution. However, it is noted that Applicants believe that all claims are clearly allowable over the prior art of record and do not abandon the canceled claims.

In this latest Office Action, claims 1, 2, and 5-7 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over US Patent 6,272,484 to Martin et al., further in view of US Patent 6,226,655 to Borman et al. Claims 11-14, 22-25, 27, and 29-32 stand rejected as anticipated by Martin.

Incorporation of allowable subject matter into all rejected independent claims renders these rejections moot.

FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 1, 4-9 and 11, 12, 14, 16-24, and 27-31, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

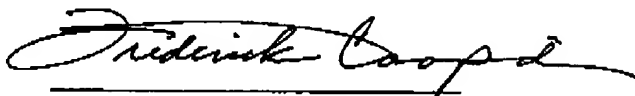
S/N: 09/442,150
Docket: ALM9990095

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Assignee's Deposit Account No. 09-0441.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date:

7/19/06



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CERTIFICATION OF TRANSMISSION

I certify that I transmitted on July 19, 2006, via facsimile to the USPTO at (571) 273-8300, this Amendment under 37 CFR §1.111, with a courtesy copy transmitted directly to Examiner D. Patel at -4066.



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